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Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 00159 051346Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 /062 W
----------074799 051352Z /46
R 050650Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8464
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: CONGRESS SPLIT FORMALIZED

REF: NEW DELHI 0019

1. THE SPLIT IN THE CONGRESS PARTY WAS FORMALIZED ON JAN-
UARY 3 WHEN THE WORKING COMMITTEE EXPELLED MRS. GANDHI AND
HER SUPPORTERS FROM THE PARTY. PARTY PRESIDENT BRAHMANANADA
REDDY WARNED THAT ALL CONGRESSMEN WHO JOINED MRS. GANDHI'S
NEW PARTY WOULD FACE SIMILAR EXPULSION. REDDY ALSO WROTE A
LETTER TO THE CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER ASSERTING THAT HIS
IS THE "REAL" CONGRESS PARTY AND THAT IT SHOULD CONTINUE TO
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BE ASSIGNED THE COW AND CALF ELECTION SYMBOL.

2. MRS. GANDHI HAS BEGUN ORGANIZING HER NEW PARTY AND AP-
POINTED THE SEVEN CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO
RESIGNED FROM THE CWC ON DECEMBER 27 AS EXECUTIVES OF HER
CONGRESS. SHE HAS GIVEN INDICATIONS THAT HER PARTY WILL
RESORT TO AGITATION IN ORDER TO EXPOSE THE FAILURES OF THE

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JANATA GOVERNMENT AND TO TAKE UP THE CAUSE OF HARIJANS AND MINORITY GROUPS. MRS. GANDHI, WHO HAS BEEN SUMMONED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE SHAH COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON JANUARY 9, MAY EVEN COURT ARREST IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS IN ORDER TO AVOID HAVING TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COMMISSION.

3. THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION NOW IS THE SO-CALLED "NUMBERS GAME" I.E., - HOW MANY CONGRESSMEN WILL LINE UP WITH EACH SIDE. FIGURES VARY, BUT THE GENERAL FEELING HERE IS THAT THE MAJORITY OF CONGRESSMEN, AT LEAST IN THE AICC AND IN THE LOK SABHA, WILL STICK WITH THE REDDY/CHAVAN GROUP. CHAVAN HIMSELF HAS SAID PRIVATELY THAT HE EXPECTS ABOUT 70 PERCENT OF THE AICC MEMBERSHIP AND CONGRESS MP'S IN THE LOK SABHA TO STAY WITH HIM. A MORE PRECISE BREAKDOWN WILL EMERGE IN THE NEXT WEEK OR SO. IT MAY WELL INCLUDE SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF DEFECTIONS TO JANATA BY CONGRESSMEN WHO WILL SEE IN THEIR PARTY'S SPLIT AN OCCASION AND PRETEXT FOR JOINING THE RULING PARTY.
GOHEEN

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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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